

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 4356

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, CA

SUBJECT: REMARKS BY PRIME MINISTER TO US EDITORS

1. AT NOVEMBER 18 LUNCHEON GIVEN BY PRIME MINISTER FOR AMERICAN INFORMATION MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES VISITING OTTAWA, ATTENDED BY PAO AND MYSELF, TURDEAU ALLUDED TO PRESENT PROBLEMS OF GOC ARISING FROM MEDIA TREATMENT OF IMPORTANT PUBLIC ISSUES WHICH, HE SAID, IS UNDERMINING WILLINGNESS OF PUBLIC TO OBEY THE LAW. SUCH OBEDIENCE IS NECESSARY FOR THE FUNCTIONING OF ALL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS, HE DECLARED. HE MADE CLEAR HIS BELIEF THAT DAILY DOSAGE BY MEDIA IS DESIGNED TO TEAR DOWN PUBLIC FIGURES AND PROGRAMS. HIS ADVERSARY OUTLOOK AT THIS POINT OF DISCUSSION WAS VERY EVIDENT.

2. TRUDEAU SAID THAT PARLIAMENTARY PROCESSES ARE DOWNED BY THE MEDIA. HE CITED THE REBELLIOUS STATE OF MIND AMONG THE POPULATION WHEN THE DEPUTIES VOTED THEMSELVES A ONE-THIRD PAY INCREASE RECENTLY, THE FIRST IN FIVE YEARS. (COMMENT: ONE JOURNALIST ASKED ME LATER WHETHER THE PM WAS AWARE THAT AMERICAN CONGRESSMEN AND HIGH OFFICIALS HAD RECEIVED ONLY A FIVE PER CENT INCREASE AT THE END OF A PERIOD OF ALMOST SIX YEARS. I REPLIED I DID NOT KNOW AND DID NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN USEFUL TO INTERRUPT THE PRIME MINISTER BY MAKING SUCH A COMPARISON WHILE HE WAS SETTING FORTH HIS VIEWS TO THE GROUP).

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EM TRUDEAU ALSO MENTIONED THE HARRASSMENTS HE AND HIS MINISTERS FACE DAILY IN THE PARLIAMENT AND THE EXORBITANT AMOUNT OF TIME HE AND OTHERS MUST BE IN THE HOUSE. DESPITE CONSTANT REMINDERS FROM HIS AIDES, AMID THE RINGING OF BELLS THAT THE SESSION HAD RESUMED AND HIS PRESENCE WAS REQUIRED, HE CONTINUED TO CHAT PHILOSOPHICALLY WITH THE US GROUP ABOUT SUCH PROBLEMS.

4. GROUP STATED THEIR APPRECIATION FOR TIME HE HAD GIVEN THEM. GROUP CONSISTED OF EDITORS OF MINNEAPOLIS TRIBUNE, WALL STREET JOURNAL, NEW YORK TIMES, BOSTON GLOBE, LOS ANGELES TIMES, AM AMERICA, DETROIT FREE PRESS, PITTSBURGH POST GAZETTE.
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